

Sex, violence hit video-game world

By Patricia Chargot

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Sensing a big payoff, a small army of home video-game manufacturers is working feverishly to bring sex and mayhem to the placid world of Pong and Pac Man.

At least seven companies, all in California, are designing or making sex- and violence-related games, said Barry Jacobs, associate editor of Video Review, a national magazine.

It appears the first game to hit the market will be "Custer's Revenge," in which a lumpy-looking stick figure, wearing only a hat, a bandanna and boots, rapes a naked young Indian woman tied to a tree. "Custer's Revenge" is to be released this month, in time for Christmas.

A couple of weeks ago, more than 150 feminists and members of New York's American Indian community protested the official unveiling of "Custer's Revenge" and two other pornographic home video games at the

National Music, Sound and Video Show at the Hilton Hotel in Manhattan.

A spokesman for American Multiple Industries of Northridge, Calif., the games' manufacturer, said, "When you see the game, you'll see it's the most ridiculous thing to get upset about. It was intended strictly as a joke."

Jacobs, who attended the show, described the games "as not very erotic, because the game console isn't capable of producing a very sophisticated image."

The object of the game is to get Custer from the right side of the screen to the left side, where the woman is tied to the tree, without getting hit more than three times by an arrow or pricked by a cactus. If the player reaches the goal, the woman's legs slide up and the two figures lock. The female figure smiles.

"She is not violated," the company spokesman insisted. "He does not rip her clothes off. It shows an enjoyable, fun act."

It's not fun for feminists and Indian groups. They claim the game promotes violence against women and minority groups and degrades Indians.

"They make women a target to be sexually violated by men," said Robin Quinn, a spokeswoman for Women Against Pornography. "We see 'Custer's Revenge' as the first of a wave of games that promote violence against women. We want to set AMI up as an example. We want them to know that women will not accept these games."

Rudy Martin, a spokesman for American Indian Community House, a group that represents Indians in the New York area, said, "As American Indians, we are vehemently opposed to the exploitative use of our race for the titillation of the public. We see this disgusting video game for what it truly is — a sexist, racist, sadistic expression, the sole purpose of which is to fill the pockets of its creators and promoters."

The suggested retail price for "Custer's Revenge" is \$49.95, about \$15 more than most home video games. It

is designed for consoles manufactured by Atari Inc., of Sunnyvale, Calif.

Atari officials could not be reached for comment, but a spokesman for AMI said the company is being sued by Atari, which reportedly feels the game is inappropriate for family use. He would not discuss details.

Six other companies with pornographic or violent video games in the works were contacted, but only two spokesmen returned phone calls.

Select-A-Tape of Hollywood has a prototype for a game called "X-Man," but the spokesman would give no details other than "it's the adventures of a man on the make."

Wizard Inc. of Los Angeles had plans for a sex-oriented game, but changed its mind because, a spokesman said, "We decided it just wasn't right, it wouldn't sell, and it was just too much aggravation." Instead, "we're making more like an R-rated than an X-rated (game). It's more violence than sex, more like 'Chainsaw Massacre.' "